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THE following is the Address, for the Publication of which the Proprietors of the Morning Chronicle were prosecuted and tried the 9th. December, 1793. The Jury after fifteen hours consideration, having returned a Verdict of NOT GUILTY.

THE DERBY ADDRESS.

At a Meeting of the Society for Political Information, held at the Talbot Inn, in Derby, July 16th. 1792, the following Address, declaratory of their principles, &c. was unanimously agreed to and ordered to be printed,

To the Friends of Free Enquiry, and the General Good.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

CLAIMING it as our indefeasible right to associate together, in a peaceable and friendly manner, for the communication of thoughts, the formation of opinions, and to promote the general happiness, we think it unnecessary to offer any apology for inviting you to join us in this manly and benevolent pursuit; the necessity of the inhabitants of every community endeavouring to procure a true knowledge of their rights, their duties, and their Interests, will not be denied, except by those who are the slaves of prejudice, or the interested in the continuation of abuses. As men who wish to aspire to the title of Freemen, we totally deny the wisdom and the humanity of the advice—to approach the defects of government with “pious awe and trembling solicitude.” What better doctrine could the Pope, or the Tyrants of Europe desire? We think, therefore, that the cause of truth and justice can never be hurt by temperate and honest discussions; and that cause which will not bear such a scrutiny, must be systematically or practically bad. We are sensible that those who are not friends to the general good, have attempted to inflame the public mind with the cry of “Danger,” whenever men have associated for discussing the principles of government; and we have little doubt but such conduct will be pursued in this place; we would, therefore caution every honest man, who has really the welfare of the nation at heart, to avoid being led away by the prostituted clamours of those who live on the sources of corruption. We pity the fears of the timorous, and we are totally unconcerned respecting the false alarms of the venal. — We are in the pursuit of truth, in a peaceable, calm, and unbiassed manner; and wherever we recognize her features, we will embrace her as the companion of happiness, of

Wisdom, and of peace. This is the mode of our conduct ; the reasons for it will be found in the following declaration of our opinions, to the whole of which each member gives his hearty assent.

DECLARATION.

I. That all true Government is instituted for the general good ; is legalized by the general will ; and all its actions are, or ought to be, directed for the general happiness and prosperity of all honest citizens.

II. That we feel too much not to believe, that deep and alarming abuses exist in the British Government, yet we are at the same time fully sensible, that our situation is comfortable, compared with that of the people of many European kingdoms ; and that as the times are in some degree moderate, they ought to be free from riot and confusion.

III. Yet we think there is sufficient cause to enquire into the necessity of the payment of seventeen millions of annual taxes, exclusive of poor rates, county rates, expences of collection, &c. &c. by seven millions of people ; we think that these expences may be reduced, without lessening the true dignity of the nation, or the government ; and therefore wish for satisfaction in this important matter.

IV. We view with concern the frequency of Wars. — We are persuaded that the interests of the poor can never be promoted by accession of territory when bought at the expence of labour and blood ; and we must say, in the language of a celebrated author, — “ We, who are only the people, but who pay for wars with our substance and our blood, will not cease to tell Kings, or Governments, “ that to them alone wars are profitable : that the true and just conquests are those which each makes at home, by comforting the peasantry, by promoting agriculture and manufactories : by multiplying men ; and the other productions of nature ; that then it is that Kings may call themselves the image of God, whose will is perpetually directed to the creation of new beings. If they continue to make us fight and kill one another, in uniform, we will continue to write and speak, untill nations shall be cured of this folly.” — We are certain our present heavy burthens are owing, in a great measure, to cruel and impolitic wars, and therefore we will do all on our part, as peaceable citizens, who have the good of the community at heart, to enlighten each other, and protest against them.

V. The present state of the representation of the People, calls for the particular attention of every man, who has humanity sufficient to feel for the honour and happiness of his country ; to the defects and

corruptions of which we are inclined to attribute unnecessary Wars, &c. &c. We think it a deplorable case when the poor must support a corruption which is calculated to oppress them ; when the labourer must give his money to afford the means of preventing him having a voice in its disposal ; when the lower classes may say. — “ We give you our money, for which we have toiled and sweat, and which would save our families from cold and hunger ; but we think it more hard that there is nobody whom we have delegated, to see that it is not improperly and wickedly spent ; we have none to watch over our interests ; the rich only are represented.” — “ The form of Government since the Revolution, is in some respects, changed for the worse : by the triennial and septennial acts we lost annual Parliaments : besides which, the wholesome provision for obliging Privy Counsellors to subscribe their advice with their names, and against Placemen and Pensioners sitting in Parliament, have been repealed.” It is said, that the voice of the people is the constitutional controul of Parliament, but what is this but saying, that the Representatives are naturally inclined to support wrong measures, and that the people must be constantly assembling to oblige them to do their duty. An equal and uncorrupt representation would, we are persuaded, save us from heavy expences, and deliver us from many oppressions, we will therefore do our duty to procure this reform, which appears to us of the utmost importance.

VI. In short, we see with the most lively concern, an army of Placemen, Pensioners, &c. fighting in the cause of corruption and prejudice, and spreading the contagion far and wide ; — a large and highly expensive military establishment, though we have a well regulated militia ; — the increase of all kinds of robberies, riots, executions, &c. though the nation pays taxes equal to the whole land rental of the kingdom, in order to have his property protected and secured ; and is also obliged to enter into separate associations against felonious depredations. — A criminal code of laws sanguine and inefficacious. — a civil code so voluminous and mysterious as to puzzle the best understandings ; by which means, justice is denied to the poor, on account of the expence attending the obtaining of it ; — corporations under ministerial or party influence, swallowing up the importance, and acting against the voice of the people ; — penalties inflicted on those who accept of offices without conforming to the violation of their consciences and their rights ; the voice of free enquiry drowned in prosecutions, and the clamours of the pensioned and interested ; and we view ; with the most poignant sorrow, a part of the people delu-

led by a cry of the Constitution and Church in danger; fighting with the weapons of savages, under the banners of prejudice, against those who have their true interest at heart; — we see with equal sensibility the present outcry against reforms, and a cruel proclamation (tending to cramp the liberty of the press, and discredit the true friends of the people) receiving the support of numbers of our countrymen; — we see the continuation of oppressive game laws and destructive monopolies; — we see the education and comfort of the poor neglected, notwithstanding the enormous weight of the poor rates; — we see burthens multiplied — the lower classes sinking into poverty, disgrace and excesses, and the means of these shocking abuses increased for the purposes of revenue; — for the same end, Excise Laws, those badges and sources of oppression, kept up and multiplied. — And when we cast our eyes on a people just formed in a free community, without having had time to grow rich, under a Government by which justice is duly administered, the poor taught and comforted, properly protected, taxes few and easy, and that at an expence as small, as that of our pension list — we ask ourselves — “Are we in England? — Have our forefathers fought, and bled, and conquered for liberty? And did not they think that the fruits of their patriotism would be more abundant in peace, plenty, and happiness? — Are we always to stand still or go backwards? — Are our burthens to be as heavy as the most enslaved people? — Is the condition of the poor never to be improved?” Great Britain must have arrived at the highest degree of national happiness and prosperity, and our situation must be too good to be mended, or the present outcry against reforms and improvements is inhuman and criminal. But we hope our condition will be speedily improved, and to obtain so desirable a good is the object of our present Association; an union founded on principles of benevolence and humanity; disclaiming all connection with riot and disorder, but firm in our purpose, and warm in our affections for liberty.

VII. Lastly — We invite the friends of freedom throughout Great Britain to form similar Societies, and to act with unanimity and firmness, till the people be too wise to be imposed upon; and their influence in the government be commensurate with their dignity and importance.

THEN SHALL WE BE FREE AND HAPPY.

By order of the Society,

S. EYRE, Chairman.

